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## **Develop or Preserve?**

An idea analysis of policy programs for the development of Sami economy and industries.

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Master thesis in Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas  
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Cover page: A herd of deer, Geraldine New Zealand, March 2014.  
Photo by Totte Nordahl.

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## **Abstract**

In order to live and create prosperity in the Arctic region, the people living in the area have been required to use the available resources and the characteristics of entrepreneurship and innovation. In the Swedish part of this region, Swedish and Sami societies have lived and developed side by side, and to some extent merged. Due to political decisions and legislation, the economic development of these societies has taken different paths, where the Swedish economy today is described as strong and the Sami economy is described as small-scale and scarce. Studies that would describe and analyze the Sami economy and its drivers from a wider perspective are lacking. This study intends to begin to fill the gap. The purpose of the study is to analyze the Sami political discourse on the development of a Sami economy and how this relates to theories on concepts development of an economy. By studying the Sami Parliament's programs and policies for economic development, the study examines to what degree Sami conceptions of economy and industries can draw on a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship and innovation. The study examined concepts of economic development using an idea analysis method. Main findings are that the Sami Parliament has a focus on preserving traditions and culture in policies dealing with economic development and seems to be supporting industries and businesses that are typically Sami, to preserve Sami culture. However, the study shows that a consistent definition of what the Sami economy or industry is and who or which group it concerns is lacking.

**Keywords:** Sami Parliament, Economy, Industry, Business, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Competition, Indigenous peoples





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# 1 Introduction

The Arctic is a region which covers the circumpolar area around and north of the Arctic Circle. It is one of the most demanding and extreme areas in the world that is populated. Several main factors contribute to this challenging environment, including the climate, the long distances between settlements and the sparse population. However, people have lived and worked in this region for millennia, since the ice retreated from the northern part of Scandinavia after the last ice age. To live and create prosperity in the Arctic region, people have been required to use the available resources and the characteristics of entrepreneurship and innovation.

The identification and presence of the Sami people as a distinct group can be traced back about 2000 years, to about year 0 (Hansen & Olsen, 2013). In order to utilize all available resources, the Sami have engaged in different means of production and have traded in a local market and with surrounding communities, i.e. some form of economy or business sector (Fjellström, 1985; Hansen, 1984). One of the assumptions of this study is that the Sami people, both as individuals and as a group, have always been entrepreneurs and innovators, that is, capable of making choices that create relative wealth in a harsh Arctic climate.

In May 2019, the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation organized a summit in Lycksele, Northern Sweden, where issues such as languages, regional development, and truth and reconciliation processes were discussed (Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, 2019b). On the subject of regional development, Chris McDonnell from OECD presented a report "Linking the indigenous Sami people with regional development in Sweden" (OECD, 2019). After the presentation, a panel debate took place with the participation of representatives from the Sami Parliaments in the Nordic countries (Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, 2019a). One of the conclusions of the report that all participants in the debate agreed on was that Sami businesses must develop and be better linked to the surrounding economy. The conclusions of the report were based on interviews with representatives of the Sami people and highlighted the problems and challenges experienced by the Sami economy and by Sami businesses (OECD, 2019). Born and raised in a Sami reindeer herding community, active in a Sami business and an official in the reindeer herding industry, these issues are of relevance to me on a private and a professional basis.

When policy documents, discussions and statements regarding Sami economy and entrepreneurship are analyzed, it is interesting to note what is not being addressed. Issues not raised during the presentation and discussion in Lycksele were how a Sami economy can be defined, how the internal development of the Sami economy can take place, and what industries or sectors the Sami economy consists of. Assuming that economic development also contributes to social development, these types of definitions are important to analyze. Definitions from a political or governing perspective focus on policy and help set the framework. Definitions provide the foundation on which initiatives will help prioritize the development and strengthening of an economy, an industry or a business/entrepreneur. One of the intentions of this study is to test the definitions of Sami economy and industries.

The economy in the northern regions of Sweden is diversified and benefits from the presence of Sami culture in many ways. Actual examples are the production of food and beverages, and the fact that the Sami presence is important for tourism (Lapland Spirits, 2019; Polarbröd, 2019; Swedish Lapland Visitor Board, 2019). Non-Sami Swedish economy is influenced by market economy and the key conditions of entrepreneurship, innovation and competition. Sami economy in the same region is relatively narrowly defined and is characterized by legislation founded in the previous century (S. Johansson, 1998). Government policies over the last 300-400 years have divided and defined Sami ethnicity both legally and socially, and linked Sami economy with the reindeer herding industry and its subsidiary industries; hunting, fishing and handicraft (Lundmark, 2011; Mörkenstam, 1999). Reindeer herding industry is central to the definition of Sami economy today. Sami businesses and entrepreneurship that are not causally linked to the reindeer herding industry (including subsidiary industries) are not necessarily defined as Sami.

This study intends to analyze the terms and content of the policy documents adopted by the Sami Parliament in Sweden which govern and define the Sami economy. The study is conducted as an idea analysis, primarily with reference to method theories introduced by Vedung (2018) and Beckman (2005). These theories present idea analysis as a scientific study of political messages with the purpose to either describe, explain or take a position on a policy document (Beckman, 2005; Vedung, 2018). This thesis intends to describe and explain policy and analyze documents aimed at developing Sami economy. The methods that are used will be presented in more detail in the upcoming research methods chapter.

## **1.1 The purpose and the research questions**

The analysis assumes that an economy (business sector) is characterized by entrepreneurship, innovation and exposure to competition. These concepts related to economy are valid and relevant to examine whether an economy has the potential to develop. The purpose of the present study is to analyze Sami political discourse on the development of a Sami economy and how this relates to theories on concepts connected to development of an economy. This is accomplished by analyzing how the Sami Parliament in Sweden defines Sami economy and how concepts related to developing of this economy are used.

The study intends to answer the main analytical question:

- To what degree can Sami conceptions of economy and industries draw on a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship and innovation?

The analytical discussion will draw on the following descriptive sub-questions:

- How does the Sami Parliament in Sweden define Sami economy and industries?
- How is the formal discussion expressed in adopted policy documents on concepts linked to the development of the Sami economy?

The study focuses on internal Sami policies as expressed by the Sami Parliament in relation to the Sami economy (business sector) in Sweden. The results may be used to encourage a discussion of allocation of economic resources to entrepreneurs in “new” branches, and to contribute to new ways to strengthen Sami development and empowerment through entrepreneurship in the long run.

## **1.2 Relevance of the research**

This study is based on the overall idea that opportunities for economic development also affect social development. All societies have a potential for development, and individuals strive to maximize benefits to create wealth. In an indigenous context, the use of an economic approach can be considered controversial (Dana, 2015) because market economy can be seen as a threat to Sami livelihoods and culture. However, in the political and legal context of this study, all individuals and groups in society are included within the same market economy system, regardless of cultural or ethnic background.

To preserve or develop the Sami culture is an ongoing issue, discussed at all political levels of both Swedish and Sami society. The Swedish state policy has, since at least the 17th century, discussed the issue of preservation of the Sami people. In recent decades, the Sami political movement has also discussed the concepts of preservation and development of Sami society (OECD, 2019; Sametinget, 2014b). The Swedish state's previous formal Sami policy has been based on ethnicity or race and sought to delineate the Sami people into a homogeneous group focusing on reindeer husbandry (Lantto, 2000; Mörkenstam, 1999). This approach was inherited by the Sami during the political mobilization of the 20th century (Lantto, 2000), 2000). This so-called "Lapp-shall-remain-Lapp" policy and the clear focus to connect reindeer herding industry and Sami ethnicity have also limited the range of possible Sami ways of living. The Sami economic policy and its development have, with the support of the legislation, revolved almost exclusively around the reindeer herding industry (Lundmark, 2011). For example, this is expressed in §9 of the Reindeer Husbandry Act (Rennäringslag) stating that; "*Reindeer herding community must not conduct other economic activities than reindeer husbandry*" (my translation) (Landsbygdsdepartementet, 1971:437). Common to the strategies expressed in the reindeer herding industry, the policies have been about preservation: preservation of a profession, preservation of a culture and preservation of a language.

Conducting an analysis of policy documents that focus on the development of the Sami economy is relevant for at least two reasons. Firstly, in an international context, the issues of indigenous peoples are raised to a higher political level within the UN (Dahl, 2012) and the emphasis on issues that concern indigenous peoples has lately been strengthened in western countries. This movement is reflected at the national level in Sweden where there is a focus on developing the Sami economy and culture, which not at least is confirmed in the OECD report<sup>1</sup> (International Labour Organization, 1989; Regeringskansliet, 2019; United Nations, 2008). Secondly, indigenous issues have also received increased attention in the area of financial instruments, such as project financing. In the European Union structural funds, for

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<sup>1</sup> The Sami Parliament refers to the OECD report *Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development*. It is noteworthy that the report's results are largely based on interviews with people who represent the Sami Parliament.

example, there are particularly dedicated funds linked to the development of Sami businesses. These funds are allocated based on political strategies and are intended to be distributed fairly. This means that those who have the right to funds should be able to apply for funding for development.

Given the above, it is relevant to analyse the Sami economy within the framework of the mainstream system in which it exists. In this way, possible strategies can be identified for how Sami entrepreneurship can be developed and broadened, thereby strengthening Sami culture and society. The choice of concepts in economic policy can show whether the Sami Parliament's policy is valid and relevant from a market economy perspective, and whether it stimulates innovation and entrepreneurship for the Sami.

### **1.3 Literature review – previous studies on the subject**

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, entrepreneurship and innovation linked to indigenous peoples began to gain attention in the international academic context. Initially, the focus was on describing the differences in the view of economics and economic development between indigenous peoples and mainstream society. The attention was on approaching a definition and describing the nature of indigenous entrepreneurship.

#### **1.3.1 About indigenous entrepreneurship**

In 2004, economics Professor Leo Paul Dana argued that indigenous entrepreneurship cannot be situated within the frameworks of conventional theories of economic development, but must be viewed in a context that is influenced by culture and social norms (Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004). Indigenous peoples are generally described as poor and low-educated, which means that the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship cannot be compared to the surrounding mainstream society (Dana, 2015; De Bruin & Matairea, 2003; Peredo et al., 2004). The research has now shifted from a definition phase of what indigenous entrepreneurship means to describing the development of indigenous entrepreneurship, and how it is characterized by certain cultural and social values (Henderson, 2018; Light & Dana, 2013; Mika, Warren, Foley, & Palmer, 2017; Tapsell & Woods, 2010). Indigenous peoples' entrepreneurship and innovations are also described in a broader circumpolar context, where indigenous peoples' contribution to development in these matters is described as positive and having led to greater autonomy (K. Coates, 2018; Hall, Leader, & Coates, 2017). In a Nordic

perspective, there is sparse literature dealing with indigenous (Sami) economy, entrepreneurship or innovation. The available literature is mainly linked to the reindeer industry, including subsidiary industries, as well as a clear focus on tourism (Leu, Eriksson, & Müller, 2018; Müller & Pettersson, 2001).

Indigenous entrepreneurship is a relatively young field of research which argues that market economy principles are not entirely applicable to business and entrepreneurship in Indigenous communities (Dana, 2015; Peredo et al., 2004). The argument for this difference is based on a view that there are cultural differences between indigenous peoples' and Western views of economics. In most cases, this reasoning is applicable, but should be related to the political and legal context of the area in question (Dana, 2015). In the global indigenous context, the Sami in Sweden are, to some extent, a special group to whom general interpretations of indigenous entrepreneurship do not necessarily apply. There is no or little difference between the Sami and the majority population regarding standards in health and economy and the Sami group is to a large extent well integrated in Swedish society in terms of housing, lifestyle and education. The currently defined Sami population is a minority group in society which means that this group retains less political power and the Sami society is part of the economic majority system, i.e. actors in the same economic arena as the rest of the population. Finally, the Sami culture largely relies on a specific, state-regulated industry with low returns, the reindeer herding industry (Johansson & Lundgren, 1998).

As described above, the prerequisites for indigenous entrepreneurship and economic development differ depending on the national context in which it is analysed. Thus, there is no universal description of indigenous entrepreneurship or economic development.

### **1.3.2 Indigenous capitalism and the Maori example**

Studies show that indigenous peoples can also run larger companies and that these corporations can be categorized under the concept of indigenous capitalism. In a wider perspective, indigenous corporations are complex, dynamic and multi-faceted just like western corporations (Bunten, 2011; Harmon, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2011; Wanhalla, 2007). The difference is that these corporations feature: incorporation in a wider political, historical and economic context; a different view of value; a twofold commitment, development of production and the capital and development of self-determination (Bunten, 2011). Another



difference is that Indigenous corporations cannot sell or share their stock on a free market or even out of tribal ownership (Ibid).

One example of a growing indigenous economy can be derived from New Zealand and the Maori people. A large part of the Maori economy focuses on export and produces a total sales turnover of about 50 billion NZD. The Maori economy is expected to continue to grow and develop through trade and diversification of the economy. Through this development, the Maori people are expected to increase their political influence, stimulate cultural development and obtain strengthened land rights. About 30% of Maori businesses in New Zealand are owned collectively. Primary industries such as fishing, forestry and agriculture dominate, but there has been an increase in diversification towards a variety of business sectors. Maori-owned businesses are expected to increase their involvement in export markets, in particular to Asia. In order to support and benefit the Maori economy, trade agreements have been negotiated. These agreements deal with tariff reductions, increased connectivity, creating framework for indigenous issues and the protection of Maori interests. Domestic policies support the growth of Maori businesses as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade supported partnership for Maori small and medium-sized businesses (SME) and introduced a wide range of Government and business to business support tools for economic development. (New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2018; Tripp, 2017)

These examples of business and trade show that economic terms such as entrepreneurship, innovation and competition fall within an indigenous context and that this can be a large-scale business.

### **1.3.3 The absence of studies and this study**

Studies conducted within the field of Sami economy and business development have mainly been published on the Norwegian side, both within and outside the academic literature (Nygaard, Nylund, & Mathisen, 2017; Olsen, 2016). In Sweden, academic literature has focused on Sami tourism development and its possible threat to the Sami culture (read reindeer herding industry) (Leu et al., 2018; Müller & Pettersson, 2001). It is difficult, if not impossible, to find studies that describe and analyze the drivers of economy and entrepreneurship in the Sami area in a wider perspective. This study intends to begin to fill the gap.

## **1.4 Organization of the thesis**

This introductory chapter describes the topic and its relevance, and why this study should be conducted. It presents the theoretical premises and places them in context, explains the research method, and sets the parameters of the research. Furthermore, it presents previous research on the subject. The second chapter describes the research method including different considerations and limitations of the study. The historical background and context are described in the third chapter, to be followed in the fourth chapter by a presentation of the empirical material. The fifth chapter highlights the findings and the last chapter, the sixth, concludes with an analysis in which the theoretical frameworks and ideas are linked to the actual results of the analysis and research questions. This last part also includes conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies on the subject.

## **2 Research method**

The study will be conducted as an idea-analysis of political programs and policies that govern the Sami business sector. This study applies Vedung's interpretation of idea-analysis where the analysis starts with a description of the studied material (Vedung, 2018). This analysis is always the researcher's description or interpretation of the material and what he or she considers relevant, based on the research question (ibid). For this description to meet scientific criteria, the researcher must structure the concepts sought in the text in an analysis chart and justify the selection that has been made (ibid). Quantification of observations in the material increase reliability and allow the reproduction of the study by other researchers (Beckman, 2005; Vedung, 2018). It is the researcher's language that describes the text, but the material stands for the words. By describing the theoretical premises and defining and operationalizing the concepts considered suitable for the study, the researcher's "glasses" (i.e. perspectives?) are defined.

### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

All individuals in a society seek relative wealth and this study assumes that economic development policies contribute to reaching this wealth. The Sami and Swedish society have developed in the same geographical area. The Sami have been partially integrated into and, in many places, assimilated into Swedish society and subsequently, also into the mainstream economy. The economy in the northern part of Sweden is growing and the drivers of

economic development include the ability to restructure and the exposure to competition (Örtqvist, 2018). Swedish economic policy has enhanced conditions for entrepreneurship and innovations and has created a rich diversity of companies/businesses. At the same time, the Sami business sector seems relatively limited in terms of numbers and size, as well as in terms of diversification (OECD, 2019; Sametinget, 2014b).

An economy consists of several industries and branches that produce goods and services. They are characterized by the constant ability to restructure, exposure to competition, and are driven by entrepreneurship and innovation (Bull & Willard, 1993; Fagerfjäll, 2009; Landström, 2016; Lowe & Marriott, 2012). Economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) argued that entrepreneurship is the activity that creates value by implementing new combinations that cause discontinuity in an industry or economy (Bull & Willard, 1993; Landström, 2016). Early economists Say and Cantillon (1800-1900s) argued that entrepreneurship consists of individuals who start and run businesses (create value), regardless of whether the business contains innovative features or not (Baumol, 1993). Whatever the definition, entrepreneurship and innovation are fundamental to the development and performance of the economy (Ibid). In the analysis of the results, this study applies, first and foremost, the definition as presented by Schumpeter.

This study is based on a number of theoretical positions which intend to explain how the relationship between entrepreneurship, economy and business development is constructed. Economy professor Hans Landström argues that there is a connection between entrepreneurship and innovation where the latter focuses on the object and the process of development, since entrepreneurship is about the subject (the individual) and the process required to commercialize, e.g. an innovation (Landström, 2016).

The above reasoning suggests that in a market economy and the development of an economy, concepts that are linked to entrepreneurship, innovation and competition are central. The use and management of these phenomena creates the basis for the development of organizations, businesses, industries and finally, the economy.

Throughout history, the Sami people have met the criteria for entrepreneurship and innovation by utilizing available resources as efficiently as possible. Examples of this are, among others and as described later in the essay, production of boats and trade in goods with other

communities. This entrepreneurship and ability to innovate has been influenced by forces that are still driving economic development, namely the ability to restructure (to be able to adjust trade to new conditions) and the exposure to competition.

The following sections describe the concepts used in the study to analyze the source material based on the theoretical approach. Below, an overview of the concepts used and their meaning in this study is presented:

- Industry – market-oriented activity, business sector, branch. A single part of an economy (Merriam-Webster, 2020).
- Economy – a sector that consists of a number of businesses, industries and organisations that produce goods and services which are characterized by constant restructuring and competition, and are driven by entrepreneurship and innovation (Bull & Willard, 1993; Fagerfjäll, 2009; Lowe & Marriott, 2012).
- Business – An organization where human and material resources are coordinated for the production and sale of goods and services (Merriam-Webster, 2020; Skärvad & Olsson, 2008).
- Innovation/Innovative - Derives from the Latin word *Innovo* "renew", and the dictionary word is *to create something new*. The Swedish government, through the Innovation Council, defines Innovation as "*the ability to successfully develop and implement new processes, services and methods that result in significant improvements in quality, efficiency or effectiveness*" (Innovationsrådet, 2020).
- Competition – The rivalry or conflict that exists between actors in a market economy (Nationalencyklopedin, 2020). The Swedish competition authority believes that competition benefits consumers by offering more favorable prices, raising the quality of products and broadening the range of goods and services (Konkurrensverket, 2020).
- Entrepreneur/Entrepreneurship – An individual who undertakes an activity or an activity that creates value by implementing new combinations that cause discontinuity (Bull & Willard, 1993; Landström, 2016).

The development of Swedish and Sami societies has taken different economic orientations in recent centuries. As will be seen in upcoming chapters in the study, this difference in development can mainly be attributed to political and legal factors. A conceptual starting

point for this work is that the development of an economy also provides conditions for the development of social dimensions. In addition, an effective, foresighted, forward-looking entrepreneurial and innovation policy is a prerequisite for the northern regions to be able to meet contemporary and future challenges (K. S. Coates & Holroyd, 2020; Hall et al., 2017). Innovation and entrepreneurship, driven by competition, is a key requirement for the development of the circumpolar north (K. Coates, 2018; K. S. Coates & Holroyd, 2020).

The above argumentation highlights concepts such as innovation, entrepreneurship, competition as central in contexts where economic development occurs. The environments where economic development occurs can also be linked to the concepts of economy, industry and business. Studying the extent and context in which these concepts are used in policies can show how the Sami Parliament relates to the central concepts and to the development of the economy. This study is based on the assumption that the Sami community and economy are not an exception to this development as the actors in the Sami economy operate in the same market and with similar products as other actors in the same region.

## 2.2 Source material

The analysis starts with a description of the documents relevant to the study based on the research questions. These documents are:

- *Sápmi – an economical resource; Business policy strategy.*<sup>2</sup> (Sametinget, 2019b)
  - *The Sami Parliament's action plan for the rural development programme 2014-2020.*<sup>3</sup>(Sametinget, 2019a)
  - *The Sami economy – how extensive is it?*<sup>4</sup>(Sametinget, 2016b)
  - *Analysis of Sápmi – regional SWOT; analysis before the rural development programme 2014-2020.*<sup>5</sup>(Sametinget, 2014a)
- (the author's translation)

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<sup>2</sup> Sápmi – En näringsmässig resurs; Näringspolitiskt strategi.

<sup>3</sup> Sametingets handlingsplan för Landsbygdsprogrammet 2014–2020.

<sup>4</sup> Samiskt näringsliv – Hur stort är det egentligen?

<sup>5</sup> Analys av Sápmi – Regional SWOT inför Landsbygdsprogrammet och havs- och fiskeriprogrammet 2014–2020.

Policies and plans produced by the Sami Parliament form the basis for allocating resources for the development of the economy and are therefore of interest. These policy documents will be analyzed based on selected concepts and compared to a theoretical frame of reference linked to economic development. These concepts will also be operationalized by analyzing them according to the scale/tension between develop vs. preserve. This empirical source material comes from the Sami Parliament (Sametinget) alone, making the study idea centered. This implies that the message is in focus rather than who is presenting it (Beckman, 2005).

The empirical basis of the study consists of the following documents and will continue to be named as follows:

<b>Sápmi – an economical resource; Business policy strategy (<i>Sapmi- en näringsmässig resurs</i>)</b>	<b>Document 1</b>
<b>The Sami Parliament's action plan for the rural development programme 2014-2020 (<i>Sametingets handlingsplan för Landsbygdsprogrammet 2014-2020</i>)</b>	<b>Document 2</b>
<b>The Sami economy – how extensive is it? (<i>Samiskt näringsliv - hur stort är det egentligen?</i>)</b>	<b>Document 3</b>
<b>Analysis of Sápmi – regional SWOT; analysis before the rural development programme 2014-2020 (<i>Analys av Sápmi - Regional Swot inför Landsbygdsprogrammet 2014-2020</i>)</b>	<b>Document 4</b>

Table 1. Overview of the study's source material

## 2.3 Selection of concepts and theoretical definition

This idea analysis of Sami business is a combination of content analysis and concept analysis, where the results are based on an analysis where certain selected concepts have been quantified in the text. The terms analyzed in the texts are the ones that are linked to the theories about business that are presented in the study. After reviewing the documents, with the theories as a starting point, the selected concepts have been entered into an analysis scheme.

The main analytical research question enquires about the degree to which Sami conceptions of economy and industries can draw on a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship and innovation. For this reason, the concept of Economy (and variations of the concept) constitutes a main category in the analysis. The second level of concepts and words that are analyzed and represent the main category are the following: Business/Businesses, Innovative/Innovation, Competition and Entrepreneur/Entrepreneurship. The concepts aim to describe a broader discourse on the substance of Sami economy.

The selected concepts have been identified in the documents through the search function in PDF Adobe. The qualitative results are examples of how the different concepts are used in the texts. The selection of quotes is an approach to show how the concepts are presented and in what context they are used.

### **2.3.1 The Dimension: develop and preserve**

In order to operationalize the various concepts, they will be analyzed based on the dimension previously mentioned: develop – preserve. The core task of the Sami Parliament is to preserve and develop the culture of the Sami people (Sametinget, 2020c), which makes these dimensions relevant to analyze in order to identify the potential for the Sami economy to develop.

## **2.4 Limitations**

Analyzing indigenous economy or entrepreneurship through the lens of mainstream theories of economic development can imply a set of possible limitations. The application of economic models to the development of indigenous entrepreneurship is characterized by the influence of the surrounding mainstream society, such as geography, legislation or other cultural and social values of economy and wealth. Furthermore, the method of analysis is largely influenced by the researcher's preferences in the subject, which can be perceived as biased. This, in turn, can lead to an idea-analysis of the second order, i.e. an analysis of the analysis (Vedung, 2018). By clearly describing the method, the potential limitations are reduced, allowing the results to be reproduced.

The analysis concerns conditions in current Sami business policy in Sweden as the documents refer to Sami and activities within the borders of Sweden. There is a practical reason for this

due to the scope of the study. However, the delimited scope does not include political differences between the Nordic countries of Norway and Finland, a comparative approach on EU membership implications, or the Norwegian ratification and Swedish and Finnish lack of ratification of the ILO convention 169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

There is an obvious link between reindeer herding industry and general Sami industries, but this study puts emphasis on Sami businesses and economy outside the reindeer herding industry. This choice was made because the Sami Parliament distinguishes between Sami industries within or outside the reindeer herding industry through different policies. Concepts that are included in sentences where reindeer herding is included have been omitted from the study as much as it was possible. For example, the strategy document states that reindeer herding is not considered in the document. Despite this, it is mentioned several times. Assessment of these demarcations has been performed from the context and on a case to case basis.

There are some additional documents that concern parts of the subject of Sami economy and business development that have been omitted because their purpose is not business development. These are the habitats program *Eallinbiras*<sup>6</sup> and the policy for traditional knowledge *Árbediethu*<sup>7</sup>. However, terms that are used in these documents appear in the results of this study.

Finally, the language may be a limitation in that the analyzed documents are written in Swedish and the study is in English. An example of challenges with translation is about compound words. Swedish uses such words to a large extent, while English uses compound words sparingly. Furthermore, there are difficulties with the writers of the source material not

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<sup>6</sup> The Sami Parliament's habitat program. The purpose of the program is to safeguard a viable and sustainable Sami living environment.

<sup>7</sup> The Sami Parliament's policy for traditional knowledge. The purpose of the program is to strengthen and safeguard the traditional knowledge in society.



being consistent in the use of variants of concepts. An example is a concept that begins with Industry/Economy (Näring/Näringsliv) which is found in 50<sup>8</sup> different variants in the texts.

Concepts found in headings, tables of contents, references and lists have been excluded.

## **2.5 The analysis and the discussion**

The analysis and presentation of research findings begins with a descriptive part of the documents, to be followed by a broader discussion of how the different concepts are used. That is, it is taken into account whether the documents are aimed at developing an economy or there are other values that are emphasized. By analyzing the context in which the concepts are used, the focus of policies can be determined, i.e. what was the goal of the Sami Parliament with its policy and how does it want to see the development of the Sami industries and economy.

The analysis of the results in the analysis scheme can be interpreted both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal analysis shows the discourse on concepts that deal with Sami industries and economy and their development. The vertical analysis shows the focus of a specific document and how the concepts and words are used in relation to other concepts and contexts. These results can be compared based on who the customer of the document is and who the recipient of the message in the policy is and compare the content of the documents with each other.

## **3 Historical background/context**

Regardless of culture or ethnic background, individuals and communities are affected by economics and politics. This applies not least to indigenous peoples who, by definition, live under direct influence of another society and jurisdiction. Indigenous entrepreneurship and economy are developed and conducted in a context over which they have or have had little influence. The Sami people is the indigenous people in the northern parts of Scandinavia and Kola peninsula and have traditionally lived off locally available resources, been self-sufficient and done business with the surrounding community. This surrounding society, in this case

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<sup>8</sup> See appendix 1

Sweden, has for the past 150 years developed into one of the world's most prominent countries in terms of democracy, economy, public health, education and gender equality, i.e. what can be defined today as wealth. One of the main keys to this success is an efficient economy characterized by restructuring and exposure to competition, which has in turn created entrepreneurship and innovations (Norrlandsfonden, 2013; Westin & Eriksson, 2016).

The picture of what Sami is and the design of Sami business life has varied in recent centuries (Fjellström, 1985; Hansen, 1984). What has mainly influenced this picture is the Nordic states' policy for the northern regions. This policy has been aimed at benefiting the interests of individual states, considering the prevailing conditions at a given time. In recent decades, however, Sami political mobilization aimed at making Sami industries and the economy more independent from state policy.

### **3.1 Sami trade and industry before the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Before the 17th century, the Sami people used the available resources from the mountains and forests for their livelihood (Brännlund, 2015; Fjellström, 1985; Hansen, 1984; Lundmark, 2011). The Sami traded goods and services over land and along the Arctic coast, not only with other Sami but different peoples and groups in the region (Fjellström, 1985; Hansen, 1984). Archaeological findings from the period between 500 AD and the 13th century show that the inhabitants of the current Sami area made extensive use of resources that were available (Ibid). In the present Swedish northern inland, the Sami subsisted on hunting, fishing, reindeer herding and the exchange of various goods with the population along the coasts (Marklund, 2015). Pollen analyzes from the mountain areas in Jämtland, Härjedalen and Tröndelag show that the area was used for agriculture, animal husbandry of sheep and goats, and grain cultivation (Fjellström, 1985). Fur was an important commodity in Europe at the time and the population of the Sami area contributed to this trade to a large extent (ibid). Another early proof of trade is ornate combs carved from reindeer antlers from around 700-900 AD that were found in Birka, located east of present-day Stockholm (Zachrisson, 2015). Historical sources from 700-800 AD show that Sami who lived along the coasts manufactured boats and ships, and sold these to other communities (Sametinget, 2017).

During the 17th century, in line with Sweden's ambitions of increased power around the Baltic Sea, the demand for goods such as dried meat, fish, hides and furs also increased

(Fjellström, 1985; Lundmark, 2011). The Sami had long before domesticated reindeer and used the tameness to assimilate the resources and benefits of the animal, but then mainly for their own livelihood and trade on a smaller scale. Resources from the reindeer were now needed on a larger scale and there were incentives for a restructuring of the Sami way of handling the reindeer (Lantto, 2000; Lundmark, 2011). Reindeer herding was developed towards a larger-scale operation that could produce larger quantities of demanded goods. The reindeer and the reindeer herder were also used in services for transport in the expanding extraction of resources in northern Sweden (ibid). During this century, the Swedish state's policy for the northern regions began to have an increasing impact on the Sami people's resource use. Among other things, the Sami in the forest land were affected by the influx of new settlers and the thus increased competition for hunting and fishing resources (Lundmark, 2011; Marklund, 2015). This led to an increased focus on reindeer herding for the Sami in the inlands, i.e. a restructuring of the use of resources (ibid). Along the coasts, the population grew through immigration from the south and competition for the available resources increased.

During the first half of the 18th century, the legal status of the Sami population regarding resource utilization was still relatively strong compared to the settlers who had come from the south (Lantto, 2000). During the latter half of this century, competition for land and resources began to show as settlers gained fishing rights on water used by the Sami, and the Sami livelihood was directed towards reindeer husbandry alone (Fjellström, 1985; Lantto, 2000; Marklund, 2015). In the following century, state control over the Sami's activities for livelihoods was tightened. In 1828, the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten announced that they could confiscate "taxlands"<sup>9</sup> from a Sami if he had lost his reindeer herd for some reason (Kvist & Wheelersburg, 1997; Ruong, 1982). Furthermore, the racial biological ideas that impacted Sami livelihood towards reindeer husbandry, became definitive through the 1886 reindeer grazing act (Lantto, 2000; Mörkenstam, 1999). As a consequence of this act, Sami taxlands were abolished and the base for operating and developing industries

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<sup>9</sup> "Taxlands", in swedish "Lapps katteland", was the name of a taxed country estate owned by a Sami or a Sami family. These properties have been documented since the 16th century and were definitively deregulated by the state in 1928.

that were not specifically related to reindeer herding was reduced. Effectively, the Sami economy was interpreted as synonymous with the reindeer herding economy. Sami who became, or had already been, resident farmers ceased to be referred to as Sami in the census (Mörkenstam, 1999). The development during the 19th century coincided with the increased resource extraction of forest, ore and energy in northern Sweden (Lundmark, 2002). During this period, a shift took place; Sami opportunities for business development were decreasing at the same time when settlers and residents (no longer defined as Sami according to state policy) gained increased access to resources and opportunities for development (Lantto, 2000; Mörkenstam, 1999). Through the reindeer grazing acts of 1892 and 1898, Sami ethnicity was defined as dependent on reindeer herding and vice versa, which meant that Sami industries outside the reindeer herding were in practice excluded from Swedish Sami policy (ibid). These other industries became “Swedish” industries, i.e. the Sami who left reindeer herding were no longer considered ethnic Sami according to the legislator (Mörkenstam, 1999).

## **3.2 Sami politics during the 20th century**

The first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the so-called *Lapp shall remain Lapp* policy (Lantto, 2000). Its main purpose was to preserve the image of Sami culture and the Sami people as reindeer herders (ibid). The state orientation was that the Sami as a people should live traditionally, and a nomadic lifestyle was advocated. The division between Sami who did reindeer herding and Sami who did not own reindeer was cemented in the legislation. This was also confirmed by the 1928 Reindeer Grazing Act, which stipulated that the Sami reindeer herder had to abandon reindeer herding if he intended to purchase land and become a resident (Lantto, 2000; Ruong, 1982). The Sami ethno-political mobilization during the first half of the century was mainly about creating tolerable living conditions for the well-defined remaining Sami population (Lantto, 2000). However, the vast majority of the Sami people, both at that point and still today, belonged to the non-reindeer herding group (Sametinget, 2020b).

### **3.2.1 State policy and the connection to the reindeer herding industry**

The Swedish state's policy towards the northern area and the Sami people have affected the possibilities and forms of indigenous entrepreneurship and industries in northern Scandinavia. Racial biological ideas during the 19th century, and the legal division between reindeer-

owning Sami and non-reindeer-owning Sami during the 20th century have divided the Sami people into two groups (Lantto, 2000; Lundmark, 2002; Mörkenstam, 1999). This division is also reflected in the Sami economy, with a group that has access to land-based resources and a larger group without traditional rights to land and water. The reindeer-owning group is well-defined today, both in size and business, while the group of Sami entrepreneurs outside the reindeer herding industry is for the most part relatively anonymous or does not operate under a Sami identity.

In several investigations, the state has drawn attention to a profitability problem in the reindeer herding industry and proposed measures to strengthen the Sami economy. Among others, Johansson and Lundgren (1998) state that the reindeer herding industry is suffering from major economic problems and is thus a socio-economic burden with reference to the fact that a large part of the activities are subsidized with tax funds. However, the authors believe that the unprofitability of the industry justifies a change in the industry's ability to commercialize other (natural) resources such as hunting/fishing, tourism and nature conservation (ibid). The conclusion was met with harsh criticism from the reindeer herder Sami collective, who mainly believed that the analysis did not reflect the reindeer as a culture and bearer of tradition (Schmidt, 2014). Whatever the perspective, it is clear that discussing Sami economy is first and foremost done by relating it to the reindeer herding industry.

## **4 Empirical material**

This section presents the empirical material and the results of the study, as well as the analysis of findings.

### **4.1 The Sami Parliament in Sweden**

The Sami Parliament in Sweden was formed in 1993 with the principle goal of improving the ability of the Swedish Sami to preserve and develop their culture (Sametinget, 2019). Thus, from the beginning, the task has been to monitor issues related to Sami culture. Gradually, the Sami Parliament has been given a broader assignment or broadened its assignment with, among other things, setting a direction for Sami business development. According to Regulation (2009:1395) with instructions for the Sami Parliament (Förordning (2009:1395) med instruktion för Sametinget), the Sami Parliament shall: "*monitor, evaluate and keep the*

*government informed of developments in the reindeer industry, other Sami businesses and Sami culture.*" This has resulted in the Sami Parliament having produced a number of reports and policies that deal with Sami economy. Furthermore, the instructions regulate the current Swedish government's directive to the Sami Parliament.

According to the Sami Parliament Act, the authority is given the task of monitoring issues concerning Sami culture in Sweden. The Sami Parliament shall work for a living Sami culture and take initiatives for activities and propose measures that promote this culture. The tasks of the authority include, in particular, to "*...decide on the distribution of the state's [...] funds [...] to Sami culture and Sami organizations as well as other funds that are made available to the Sami, ... perform the other tasks that fall to the Sami Parliament according to law or other statute*" (Sametinget, 2020c).

The Sami Parliament is a hybrid in its form. It is both a state authority and an elected body, which means that it has both tasks of authority, and tasks to form a political direction on how different activities should be governed (Mörkenstam, 1999). The activities of the Sami Parliament are subject to: *The Sami Parliament Act, Regulation with instructions for the Sami Parliament* and an *Annual regulation letter* from the state ministry.

The Sami Parliament has a Sami business policy agenda, mainly linked to Sweden's membership in the EU. As a basis for this business policy agenda, the Sami Parliament has worked out economic investigations, surveys and business policy programs. Within the framework of the EU Structural Funds, the Sami Parliament has adopted an action plan for the rural development program 2014-2020. This plan has the task to determine the direction of the economy, i.e. how the allocated resources for the development of Sami society are to be distributed. (Sametinget, 2020a)

## **4.2 General presentation of the source material**

This section provides an overview of the source materials that the study intends to analyze. These empirical data consist of documents that form the basis of the Sami Parliament's business policy (trade and industry; economic), both in terms of policy-making and the exercise of authority. The material consists of four different documents, one of which is a political strategy, one is a management tool for the authority, and finally, two analyses of

Sami economy (trade and industry). The policy document is a summary or an end product of the analyses and action plans that were developed previously and are analyzed in this study.

Document 1, *Sápmi – an economical resource; Business policy strategy* (2019b) is a policy strategy document adopted by the Sami Parliament's plenary on November 29, 2019 and prepared by the Sami Parliament's trade and industry department. The purpose is to be "A guiding light and source of inspiration for political development work" (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 3).

According to the document, Sami economy (business sector) has great potential and is important for the development of culture, language and the rural areas. The strategy does not cover the reindeer herding industry, which has its own policy. The role and responsibilities of the Sami Parliament are described. The assignment regarding business development is based on *Regulation (2009:1395) with instructions for the Sami Parliament*. Furthermore, the Sami Parliament shall assist the Swedish Board of Agriculture (*Jordbruksverket*) in the implementation of the EU's rural development program.

Document 2, *The Sami Parliament's action plan for the rural development programme 2014-2020* (2019a) has been prepared and published by the Sami Parliament. This document is valid from January 17, 2019 and was approved by the Swedish Board of Agriculture on April 1, 2019. The purpose of the EU Rural Development Program is to contribute to smart and sustainable growth for all. The Sami Parliament's plan shall contribute to fulfilling this goal. The action plan contains measures and priorities for business support as well as criteria for assessing applications for funding of businesses initiatives. These criteria form the basis of whether a business should be granted support from the Rural Development Program or not.

The action program is about more than just economic development, it also covers conservation of cultural environments, service in rural areas, development of renewable energy. and start-up support for the reindeer herding industry. The focus of this work is the discourse on economic development of industries outside the reindeer herding industry.

Document 3, *The Sami economy – how extensive is it?* (Sametinget, 2016b), is an investigative assignment commissioned by the Sami Parliament. Its purpose is to investigate the importance of Sami economy; evaluate the Sami economy contribution to rural

development; develop a method for investigating Sami economy; and to describe values of the Sami habitats and existence. The study was published on August 22, 2016 and had been prepared by a single investigator on behalf of the Sami Parliament. The report contains a statistical analysis, an economic analysis, a description of the Sami Parliament and municipal tasks related to Sami economy, and suggestions for follow-up investigations.

Document 4, Analysis of Sápmi – regional SWOT; analysis before the rural development programme 2014-2020 (2014a), was published in 2014 by the Sami Parliament and prepared by an official at the authority. The purpose was to provide a picture of the Sami economy before the implementation of the EU's rural development program 2014-2020.

#### **4.2.1 The purposes of the documents and why they exist**

The purposes of the analyzed documents differ. The purpose of document 1, the political strategy, is to be a guide for the development of Sami industries and economy, since the purpose of the action plan (document 2) is, based on an authority role, to decide on the distribution of funds for the development of businesses, culture and society. The aim of the two analytical documents (document 3 and 4) is to serve as a basis for the creation of the above political strategy and action program. The reason why these documents exist can be linked to the Parliament's mission as a representative of the Sami people and as an authority with responsibility for the development of Sami economy.

Document 3 is written by an individual consultant and document 4 is written by an official of the Sami Parliament. For that reason, conclusions and discussions in the documents may be influenced by these people's own opinions. However, the Parliament has approved the documents and published them on the website, which means that the content of the documents is the Sami Parliament's material.

## **5 Findings**

In this section, concepts in the source material will be presented, described and analyzed. Based on the theoretical discussions around development of an economy, these concepts are related to economy, industry, business, entrepreneurship, innovation and competition.

The theoretical starting point for this study is that concepts such as Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Competition are central to the economy and its development of



industries and businesses. The analysis shows that these concepts occur to varying degrees and in different contexts, not always linked to economic development. Overall, words related to Industry / Economy and Business are often used in the documents. Concepts related to Innovation and Competition occur rarely in the documents, except in document 2. Throughout the documents, terms linked to the Entrepreneur are rarely used. Concepts linked to this appears ten times in total in the four documents (Appendix 1). For example, document 3 does not mention concepts related to Competition or Entrepreneur at all, and Industry/Economy also appears relatively rarely.

The analysis of the documents shows that concepts linked to culture appear frequently in relation to the economic terms selected for analysis in this study (Appendix 1). For instance, terms linked to Tradition are used more often in the four documents than terms linked to Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Competition combined (Appendix 1). An initial assumption is that the Sami economy and businesses operate in an economic environment where the concepts of Innovation and Entrepreneurship are central. According to the documents, concepts that are linked to Culture and Tradition are as important to discuss in connection with the development of the economy as concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The following findings demonstrate the contexts in which the above-mentioned economic terms are used in the respective documents analyzed in this study.

## 5.1 Industry and Economy

According to document 1<sup>10</sup>, the Sami Parliament in Sweden defines Sami industry or Sami economy as follows: *"The industries that are traditionally characteristic of the Sami are reindeer husbandry, duodji, farming, hunting and fishing. Together with other Sami industries, they form the basis for the further development of a varied and product-creating economy"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 3). Regarding which industries are included in the Sami economy, the Sami Parliament expresses that *"The Sami economy thus consists of a variety of activities that have in common that they are based on the close connection between industry,*

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<sup>10</sup> Concepts related to the Industry and Economy is used 78 times in the document in 14 pages of analyzed text.

*environment and culture, and are characterized by small-scale and local adaptation"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 11).

Values linked to traditional knowledge and culture must, according to the Sami Parliament, permeate all work with and within Sami industries and economy. *"[...] values are based on our language, our culture, an equal society, Árbodiehtu / traditional knowledge, Eallinbiras / our living environment, climate adaptation and sustainable development. The values must permeate all work with and within the Sami economy"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 5). The concept of culture and tradition is central in the document and the Sami Parliament believes that these should also be incorporated into economic policy<sup>11</sup>. The following quotes showcase this connection: *"If it is to be possible to maintain and develop a living Sami culture in the broadest sense, it is necessary that Sami cultural issues become a natural element in the Sami economic policy as well"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 6) and *"The traditional forms of our industries have always been based on long-term and on a sustainable use of natural resources"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 6).

The Sami Parliament argues that reindeer herding, together with hunting and fishing, are the traditional industries and are an indispensable part of Sami culture. *"[...] The immense future challenge is to strengthen and preserve our traditional Sami industries and at the same time [...] develop new viable businesses and completely new directions in our economy"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 3).

The action plan<sup>12</sup> (document 2) summarizes the goal of the development of Sami industries such as: *"[...] The development of all Sami industry and community development must be based on traditional Sami knowledge - arbediehtu and sustainable development"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 4).

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<sup>11</sup> A search of the concept of Culture gives about the same number of hits in the documents as the concept of Industry/Economy.

<sup>12</sup> Concepts related to industry and economy appear 86 times in 132 pages.

The line of reasoning in the document shows that Sami culture must be given a great value in the development of the economy and that the Sami themselves must decide on the development.

The Sami culture is unique [...] Therefore, it is important that it is the Sami themselves who are responsible for the revitalization and development of their own culture, not least from an ethical point of view, to be able to decide for themselves how they want the Sami culture to be promoted and be the subject of industries. (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 120)

The word “tradition” occurs frequently in contexts where the development of Sami industries is discussed and especially where the Sami food sector is discussed, as expressed in the following quotation: *"The goal of the Regional Action Plan is the development of all Sami industries, and community development should be based on traditional Sami knowledge [...] and sustainable development"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 3).

Document 3<sup>13</sup> defines Sami economy in accordance with the Sami Parliament's definition, namely, as one that *"[...] consists of a variety of activities that have in common that they are based on the close connection between industry, environment and culture, and are characterized by small-scale and local adaptation"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 2). This definition shows that culture and traditional knowledge is considered as part of the very definition of Sami economy, where it forms a central part together with the environment and small-scale activities. In addition, it states that *"[...] all Sami industries must be based on traditional Sami knowledge and sustainable development"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 4) and *"Commercial activities conducted by Sami are Sami industry"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 11).

According to document 3, the traditional Sami industry is reindeer husbandry with the subsidiary industries hunting, fishing and handicraft (duodji). However, the text also acknowledges that a broader definition is needed to describe Sami industries and economy today: *"[...] in Sami economy all industries are included, i.e. all Sami businesses and the*

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<sup>13</sup> Document 3 describes the concept of Industry or Economy as terms or variation of the terms 168 times in the 35 pages text.

*economy generated from the Sami area" (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 8) and "[...] the basis of the Sami economy and culture is what nature produces and people can assimilate, such as berries, game, fish, water, trees, reindeer grazing, recreation etc. [...]" (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 7).*

Furthermore, document 3 connects Sami economy with both the environment and Sami identity by noting that *"The Sami living environment [...] has a direct connection to its own natural and cultural landscape, which shows that [...] all Sami industries must be included in an assessment of how extensive Sami economy is"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 31).

The document further emphasizes that there is uncertainty about the scope of Sami economy and also stresses that there is no official definition of Sami industries: *"[T]oday, there is no compiled information on the extent of Sami industry as a whole with all Sami-owned businesses in Sápmi on the Swedish side"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 23).

According to document 4<sup>14</sup>, Sami economy can be defined as:

[...] a diversity of activities that have in common that they are based on the close cooperation between industry, environment and culture, and are characterized by small-scale and local adaptation. To live in rural areas often requires a combination of trade and service (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 5).

Furthermore, the importance of Sami industries, and the connection to tradition and culture is emphasized as follows:

Many Sami have traditional Sami industries as one of the sources of income, but for other Sami this is only a limited part of their livelihood. Nevertheless, this is of great importance as the Sami industries are an important part of the Sami culture (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 6).

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<sup>14</sup> The document uses the term Industry or/and Economy 56 times on 17 pages of text.

The practice of traditional Sami industries is reserved for the Sami people in accordance with agreements with the EU, despite the fact that this is contrary to the Treaty of Rome which forms the basis of the European Union's free and open market for trade in goods and services.

[...]despite the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, the Sami can be given the exclusive right to reindeer herding in the traditional Sami areas and that the protocol can be extended to take into account the continued development of such exclusive rights for the Sami that are linked to the Sami traditional industries. (p. 4)

According to the document (4) the Sami economy is intimately connected with Sami culture, as the following quote stresses; *"The Sami culture includes its industries and cannot be distinguished from each other"* (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 16).

### **5.1.1 Analysis – Industry and Economy**

The Sami Parliament believes that it is necessary for cultural issues to be involved in a Sami business policy. A future challenge is considered to be to strengthen and preserve the traditional industries at the same time as new industries are developed. By linking the development of the economy to culture, Sami autonomy will be strengthened.

The results indicate that the Sami Parliament considers it important that the traditional Sami economy and its industries have a connection to culture and traditional customs. These industries are defined by a close connection to the environment and culture, and are small-scale with few employees. According to the documents, the characteristics that should permeate the Sami industries are language, culture, traditional knowledge and sustainability. It also appears that all Sami industries should be based on traditional Sami knowledge and sustainable development, as traditional forms of Sami livelihood have always been based on the sustainable use of resources. The Sami Parliament's view of the Sami economy and its industries, as they are presented, is in line with how previous studies present indigenous entrepreneurship (Peredo et al., 2004). Values that go beyond just profit are considered.

The Sami Parliament stresses that all commercial activities conducted by Sami are Sami industries. At the same time, it emphasizes that these industries must be based on traditional knowledge and sustainability and that the basis for the Sami economy is taken from what can be extracted from nature and as part of the ecosystem. The documents also highlight that there

are Sami who conduct activities outside the traditional Sami area with activities that are not specifically Sami.

## 5.2 Business and Businesses

The Sami Parliament emphasizes that Sami businesses<sup>15</sup> are important for culture and have a close and natural connection to traditions. *"[...] Sami business has great potential and is an important factor for the Sami culture, the Sami language and for rural development and survival"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 3). This opinion is also reflected in the Sami Parliament's vision for business development: *"Our vision is to create the right conditions for all businesses to be established, to grow, to be strengthened and developed in industries that have a living and natural connection to Sami traditions"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 4).

The text (document 1) claims that Sami businesses run their activities with a balance between commercial and non-commercial interests and that Sami businesses are preferably small-scale and operate in rural areas. *"A Sami business balances between business and non-commercial values, for example a reindeer herder is not only a business owner but also a bearer [...] of cultural heritage"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 11).

Document 2<sup>16</sup> presents Sami businesses as small-scale with low turnover and few employees, and as ones that are spread over a large geographical area.

In Sápmi - the Sami region, there are many Sami business owners, but as the Sami area is extensive, the business owners are also spread over a large area. The Sami industries are small and business activities are based exclusively on the micro level (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 33).

Sami businesses are divided into traditional and new businesses, and they have an exclusive product based on culture and tradition.

The businesses that operate in the Sami industries, both traditional and new, have a completely unique product. It can be anything from the sale and processing of own

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<sup>15</sup> The term Business/Business enterprise and variations appears 40 times in the text.

<sup>16</sup> Business and variation of the term occurs 273 times in the body-text of the document.

raw materials, manufactured according to traditional production methods, to newly created goods and services based on the Sami tradition and culture (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 33).

According to document 2, the overall goal is *"to increase business ability in the Sami industries in order to create more jobs"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 34). This is considered an important priority for regional development and Sami businesses have a role to play in it.

The Sami Parliament has a special government task to direct efforts for diversification of Sami businesses. The purpose is to develop the Sami economy to create opportunities to live and work in the rural areas and increase the number of jobs.  
(p.35)

In general, document 3<sup>17</sup> states that there are two categories of companies: Sami businesses or non-Sami businesses. The text initially discusses which businesses are considered Sami and what additional activities Sami companies can do as *"Then there is everything else a Sami business can do such as trade and service, transport, construction and civil engineering, consulting in economics, law [...] forestry, property management [...]"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 2).

The document describes the extent of Sami business activities in the Swedish part of Sápmi as *"[[...]] all industries are included in Sami economy, i.e. all Sami businesses and the economy generated from the Sami area"* (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 8). Simply put, Sami businesses constitute the Sami economy.

In document 4<sup>18</sup>, the typical Sami business is described as:

[...] found in rural areas and is a micro-business. There are very few Sami businesses that have more than one employee. However, several may be employed in the business, [...] Typical of these businesses is that their market is primarily local as the long distances limit a larger market for natural reasons (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 5).

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<sup>17</sup> The term Business and variants of this is used 227 times on the document's 35 pages.

<sup>18</sup> The term Business and variants of this are used 41 times in the document.

Document (4) discusses the future and development of new Sami businesses and that these will come from the traditional industries.

We have not yet seen tomorrow's new business owners who will create new conditions and new areas for business enterprise from the traditional Sami industries. The restructuring towards a more modern and differentiated professional life has naturally recruited Sami to professional life in addition to the traditional basic industries. (s.14)

### **5.2.1 Analysis – Business and Businesses**

The Sami Parliament considers that Sami businesses are an important factor in stimulating culture, language and development in rural areas. The Sami Parliament's vision is to create good conditions for businesses with a natural connection to Sami traditional knowledge to grow and develop. Furthermore, these businesses are characterized by a balance between commercial and non-commercial interests, and between being small-scale and covering a large geographic area.

The definition of a Sami business is small-scale, low turnover, few employees and active in sparsely populated areas. This definition can be found in both the political document and the action plan, as well as in the two analytical documents.

Also, regarding discussions about concepts linked to businesses, the Sami Parliament states that these activities should be performed in a certain way. It is stated throughout the documents that Sami companies must be characterized by certain traits to be covered by the stated strategies and plans. There seems to be a desire to preserve Sami businesses in a certain form with tradition and culture as important constituents. This traditional and cultural focus differs from theories of entrepreneurship and innovation that are characterized by creating value through change.



## 5.3 Innovative and Innovation

According to document 1<sup>19</sup>, the Sami Parliament has an overall objective to *"[...] encourage knowledge transfer and innovation and support the development of innovative Sami products"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 4) and *"[...] create increased [...] innovation capacity in the Sami economy in a long-term and sustainable way"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 4).

The Sami Parliament also states that handicraft policy must be innovative and explore new areas. The specific industry associated with the word innovation in the text is handicraft (duodji), and this connection is expressed the following way: *"To strengthen collaboration between stakeholders in duodji and other Sami industries and to promote entrepreneurship and innovative product development in the Sami arts and crafts [...]"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 12).

Examples from document 2<sup>20</sup> of contexts where the concept occurs are mainly about new ideas, investment and competence development. For example, *"[...] to facilitate collaboration between different companies, [...] investment in innovations - new goods and services based on traditional knowledge, entrepreneurship for young entrepreneurs, skills development through good examples, mentorship or [...] exchange of knowledge and experience"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 33) and *"A product, service or working method can be considered an innovation as long as it is not used to the extent it should in rural areas"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 38).

As mentioned in the above quote, the action plan connects innovation to rural areas. Furthermore, innovative or innovation is used as a criterion in the assessment of an investment or in determining if the investment has a sufficient innovative focus. The word or variants are used in several different contexts and are relatively well spread in the text. As the quotes above show, innovation is also linked to traditional knowledge.

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<sup>19</sup> The concept of Innovative / Innovation or variants of the word is used five times document 1. The variants used are Innovative and Innovation ability.

<sup>20</sup> Innovative / innovation or variations of the word occur 36 times on the document's 132 pages of text.

In Document 3<sup>21</sup>, the word innovation is used in quotations from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity article 8j.

Subject to national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge innovations and practices. (Sametinget, 2016a, p. 25)

Document 4<sup>22</sup> emphasizes that "*Support for innovative initiatives must be encouraged*" (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 14) and an overall goal according to the document is to support and develop new innovative products. "*Supporting and development of new, innovative Sami products, goods and services*" (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 18).

### **5.3.1 Analysis – Innovative and Innovation**

The concept of innovation is used sparingly in the various documents. The Sami Parliament states that one of its objectives is to support innovative Sami products, and create capacity for innovation in a long term and sustainable manner. Furthermore, the Sami Parliament intends to strengthen collaborations that promote innovative product development in handicrafts and art. The action program (document 3) will work for investments in innovations based on traditional knowledge and ensure that these are linked to rural areas. The analysis documents (doc. 3 and 4) refer to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to protect innovations that embody traditional lifestyles while preserving biodiversity. Document 4 states that support for innovative initiatives must be encouraged and that one goal is to develop new innovative Sami products.

In terms of concepts related to innovation, the Sami Parliament's definitions and discussion differ from the theoretical definition of innovation. The Sami Parliament links innovation to

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<sup>21</sup> The term Innovation or Innovative including variants appears 3 times in the text.

<sup>22</sup> Innovation or Innovative and their variants are used five times in the document's body text.

tradition, which can be perceived as opposites if interpreted through the theoretical framework used in this study - create something new versus preserve something. One reason for the scarce use of the term may be that it may be perceived as controversial in comparison with preserving culture and traditional knowledge. An alternative reason may be that the Sami Parliament does not have an agenda of innovation or discusses the concept.

## 5.4 Competition

Document 1<sup>23</sup> describes competitiveness as an objective for all Sami industries, *"to create increased competitiveness, [...] in the Sami business community in a long-term and sustainable way"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 4).

Strengthening the competitiveness of the food industry is mentioned a number of times in document 2: *"[...] support aims to increase the competitiveness of primary producers in food production and thereby increase the number of jobs [...]"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 60). The contexts where the concept occurs are mainly about different investment support and how these should contribute to *"[...] strengthen companies' competitiveness and profitability by adapting companies' general capacity and sustainability, as well as increase companies' opportunities to adapt to new market conditions"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 42) and *"[...] communicating a strong and competitive Sami economy, it also contributes to a positive view of [...] Sami issues"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 133).

In Document 3 there are no terms connected to, or variations of, competition in the document.

Competition<sup>24</sup> is mentioned in document 4 in the discussion about new Sami industries. The concept is used to describe that Sami industries are characterized by low competition as follows: *"Small-scale industry, construction, transport industry [...] and private service companies can generally be characterized as small companies with few employees, low competition, limited market and weak profitability"* (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 14).

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<sup>23</sup> The term competition is used once in the document as the variant competitiveness.

<sup>24</sup> The concept of competition and variants is found four times in the text.

The document refers to results from a SWOT analysis where, among other things, increased competitiveness is seen as an opportunity, but also as a threat to natural resources. *"Increased competitiveness by investing in innovations, entrepreneurship and new industries"* (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 20) and *"Competition for natural resources"* (ibid).

#### **5.4.1 Analysis - Competition**

The Sami Parliament believes that Sami industries must be developed in the long term and be sustainable in order to become competitive. Increasing the industries' general capacity and sustainability, as well as their capability to reach new markets will contribute to increased competitiveness, according to the documents.

Sami businesses are portrayed as small with low competitiveness where innovations, entrepreneurs and new industries can increase competitiveness.

In general, it seems that what is primarily meant by competition is how the Sami economy and companies should be competitive with the surrounding society. There is no reasoning about competition within the Sami economy and the concept is rarely linked to entrepreneurship and innovation, in response to exposure to competition.

### **5.5 Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship**

In Document 1<sup>25</sup>, it appears that the overall goal of the Sami Parliament is to *"[...] strengthen Sami industry organizations and networks that give Sami businesses and entrepreneurs access to collective expertise, mentorship and business incubator activities"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 4) and *"The Sami Parliament, Sami entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, organizations and networks together with the rest of society [...] have great opportunities to become a force in the development of Sápmi and rural areas"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 8).

The industries that the document mainly connects with entrepreneurship have a cultural or traditional connection as the following quotes show: *"To promote a positive development that highlights, enables and creates conditions for Sami entrepreneurs, businesses and*

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<sup>25</sup> Entrepreneur and variants of the word are used in the document 6 times on 14 pages. The variants of the word that are found are Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship.

*organizations in the cultural sector to conduct a sustainable business"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 15) and *"To strengthen collaboration [...] and promote entrepreneurship and innovative product development within the Sami arts and crafts [...]"* (Sametinget, 2019b, p. 12).

Entrepreneur and variants of the term appear once in document 2. The context is about development efforts to facilitate the development of entrepreneurship for young business practitioners through collaboration. *"[...] to facilitate collaboration between different businesses [...] entrepreneurship for young business practitioners, skills development through good examples, mentorship or otherwise the exchange of knowledge and experience"* (Sametinget, 2019a, p. 33).

The concept of Entrepreneur or variants is not present in document 3.

Document 4 connects the concept to define entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

In Sweden, about 40 individual Sami entrepreneurs are active in tourism, of which most companies have been around for less than ten years. Most of the entrepreneurs are women and about half run their business in combination with reindeer husbandry, or with other Sami business practices such as duodji (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 12)

and

It is important to stimulate new businesses and entrepreneurship in order to increase the geographical density among the Sami tourism entrepreneurs. This provides increased opportunities for cooperation and increases the overall quality of the Sami offer of tourism (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 12).

It is also emphasized that investing in entrepreneurship provides opportunities for *"Increased competitiveness by investing in innovations, entrepreneurship and new industries"* (Sametinget, 2014a, p. 20).

### **5.5.1 Analysis – Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship**

The Sami Parliament proposes that entrepreneurs be given access to mentors and expertise for opportunities for development. Entrepreneurs are seen as part of a Sami community that can

contribute to the development of the Sápmi and rural areas in the north. The Sami Parliament mainly connects this entrepreneurship with industries such as handicrafts and tourism.

There is altogether little discussion of concepts dealing with entrepreneurship. In the documents, the term entrepreneur can in certain cases be equated with the term business, and is used in approximately the same sense. Entrepreneur, which in itself is about development through change, can possibly be experienced as controversial if you have the preservation of tradition and culture as a starting point.

## **6 Analytical discussion**

This section is organized based on the research questions and divided into three parts. The first part of the discussion is about demonstrating a definition of the Sami economy and presenting the formal discussion on the development of the Sami economy and industry. The second part discusses the extent to which Sami conceptions of economic development can draw on a conceptual structure for entrepreneurship and innovation. In the third section, suggestions for future research are presented.

### **6.1 How do the Sami Parliament in Sweden define Sami economy and industries?**

The results of the empirical material show that a consistent definition of what the Sami economy or industry is, and who or which group it concerns, is lacking. In general, the results show that the Sami economy has a strong connection to Sami culture and traditional knowledge. Overall, the typical Sami entrepreneur is portrayed as a one-man business that conducts an activity that is linked to Sami tradition and knowledge and operates in rural areas. It is not described who is considered Sami or what the basis for the definition of Sami economy is.

The approaches to the definition of the economy, but also the individual industries and businesses can be linked to previous studies on the subject of indigenous entrepreneurship. Thus, there is a difference between the traditional (mainstream) view of the market economy and the goals that are brought forward by the Sami Parliament as relevant for Sami indigenous entrepreneurship. In the Scandinavian context, indigenous industries belong to the

same market, and fall under the same regulations as the rest of the population and businesses, which means that competition takes place in the same market.

## **6.2 How is the formal discussion expressed in adopted policy documents on concepts linked to the development of the Sami economy?**

Where concepts linked to economic development are present, it is common that the issue of preserving culture or tradition is mentioned as well. According to the Sami Parliament, the main intention is to develop the industries that are considered to be typically Sami, in order to preserve Sami culture. What is to be considered as authentically Sami, and who is to decide about this is not discussed in the documents. Yet, the analyzed data more or less concretely specify which industries and businesses the Sami economy consists of. Activities or industries that cannot be directly linked to culture or tradition are mentioned only briefly. The reason for this is explained by an underlying purpose to preserve, i.e. the specified industries are considered to qualify as parts of Sami culture or traditional knowledge. As the historical background shows, the Sami have conducted and lived off a wide array of industries throughout history. However, this variation has diminished over time due to state policy and Sami political ambitions.

There seems to be a consensus that Sami industries are and should be small-scale, have few employees and primarily operate in rural areas. The Sami Parliament takes this view further by anchoring it in a political strategy document. A further discussion may be how this affects the development of Sami businesses, but that it is not too much in conflict with tradition and culture. It is also assumed that Sami industries are run by individuals living in sparsely populated areas. In general, there is limited reasoning about how to attract more Sami to be engaged as entrepreneurs. Instead, the main goal appears to be directed towards strengthening already existing companies.

## **6.3 To what degree can Sami conceptions of economy and industries draw on a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship and innovation?**

According to the documents, the Sami industries or economy must relate to traditions and a cultural regulatory framework. However historically, this has not always been the case. Over

time, a rather narrow perception of what should be considered as Sami has been developed, partly through legislation but also through Sami and mainstream perceptions of what is to be perceived as authentically Sami. According to the results of this study, there is an obvious difference today between what can be interpreted as Swedish or Sami economy, where the latter is based on tradition and culture to develop the economy.

An analysis of the discourse surrounding Sami economy and industries leads back repeatedly to the dimensions of development and preservation. In the theories referred to in this study, the core of a thriving economy is characterized by development and the possibility of change, i.e. restructuring. The results of the study show that the Sami Parliament puts a strong focus on protecting the traditions and culture even in politics that is fundamentally about developing something, in this case an economy.

Based on the idea that Sami businesses compete on the same market and terms as all other companies in society, this preservation idea risks becoming an obstacle for the full development of Sami economy. Since the Sami businesses, like all businesses in Sweden, operate in a market economy, competition is a key word. According to the market economy discourse, exposure to competition drives innovation and entrepreneurship, which in turn can provide benefits for production, and in the long run, for the whole economy.

The reasoning that the development of an economy should relate to certain traditions can be perceived as opposing the very definition of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Entrepreneurship and innovation rely on constant change of conditions, that something new is emerging. Contrary to this view, tradition is by definition about preserving something over time. If the policy on economy mainly emphasizes preserving traditions and culture, the ambition of developing an economy might appear as challenging.

A problem with a narrow definition of a Sami industry could be that other industries that are not mentioned in the documents are not considered Sami and therefore fall outside any economic investments. Adding to this, these industries will most probably be excluded when Sami economy is described. In the long run, this entails that entrepreneurship and innovation are not really stimulated, and that the Sami economy is predestined to remain "small-scale".



The fact that the documents highlight culture equally often as business testifies that representatives of the Sami believe that the cultural element in business is important, and confirms the theory that Peredo et al. (2004) and Dana (2015) present on the subject. It might even imply that ethnicity and culture might constitute limitations to Sami entrepreneurs' ability to compete on equal terms with non-Sami businesses. This limitation applies not only to actors on the mainstream market, but also to internal Sami actors. Since Sami businesses must comply with certain cultural rules that other companies can ignore, an unhealthy competitive situation arises. In comparison, to exclude certain activities in the Swedish economy as non-Swedish because they do not meet any kind of norm about being Swedish may seem like a far-fetched idea.

A further discussion on the subject can be initiated by raising the question about what incentives exist that make it worth marketing oneself as a Sami business or with a Sami product. This discussion is related to what may or may not be considered Sami industry or business, and whether a business falls outside the definitions of who is Sami or what is traditional. The risk is that an image has been created of Sami industries that is difficult for many Sami to fulfill. As a consequence, businesses that do not have a direct connection to what is considered traditional Sami do not necessarily gain from marketing themselves as a Sami business. If this is the case, the incentive to operate as a Sami business is lacking.

The results show that the starting point of the Sami Parliament's view on developing the Sami economy is that tradition and culture create the economy. An alternative approach might have been that the economy could contribute to providing better conditions for a stronger culture and the maintenance of traditions. By comparison, the Maori in New Zealand have been preoccupied with the question of how a strong economy should contribute to a strengthened culture through various economic initiatives that benefit the people in various ways.

## **6.4 Conclusions and future research**

The purpose of the study was to analyze the Sami political discourse on the development of a Sami economy and how this relates to theories on concepts connected to development of an economy. The sub-goals were to analyze how the Sami Parliament in Sweden defines Sami economy and how concepts related to developing this economy are used. In order to meet these objectives, the following research problem was investigated: "To what degree can Sami

conceptions of economy and industries draw on a conceptual framework of entrepreneurship and innovation?". Idea analysis was used to produce data to fulfill the purpose and answer the questions by using an analysis scheme. The concepts that were problematized were: Economy, Industry, Business, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Competition. These concepts were operationalised along the dimension of develop – preserve.

Key findings in the study are:

- The Sami Parliament puts a strong focus on protecting the traditions and culture even in politics that are fundamentally about developing something, in this case an economy.
- A consistent definition of what the Sami economy or industry is and who or which group it concerns is lacking.
- The Sami Parliament's main intention is to develop industries that are considered to be typically Sami, in order to preserve Sami culture.

For further studies in this subject area, it would be relevant to clarify more thoroughly what is Sami innovation, who is to be considered a Sami entrepreneur, and how the Sami economy should relate to the mainstream economic system in which it is inevitably part of. It has not been clarified who is included in the Sami collective businesses today and what measure of cultural and traditional connection a business must have to be regarded as Sami. The reasoning is constantly redirected towards the core question: Who is Sami and who decides that? Lastly, one final question needs to be addressed in future research on economy: is it at all possible to develop industries or an economy based on a cultural or ethnic basis in a market economy system?

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## Appendix 1

	Document 1	Document 2	Document 3	Document 4	Sum
Number of pages body text	14	132	35	17	198
<b>Develop</b>					
<b>Industry/Economy</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Business</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>581</b>
<b>Innovative/Innovation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Competition</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Entrepreneur</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Preserve</b>					
<b>Culture</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Tradition</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Preserve</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Identity</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>

The table shows counted words in the documents that can be linked to selected categories in the body text. Words in headings and reference lists are excluded. The selection is focused on the initial stem of each selected word.

